How can cognitive interviewing methods contribute to the development of a mixed-mode data collection system?

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2010: SN project to put LFS on the web

1. Review on how to make LFS more efficient
2. Plan LFS pilot with mixed-mode design and possible experiments
3. Develop user friendly web questionnaire for LFS (2.-7. interview round)
4. Questionnaire development to reduce instrument effects
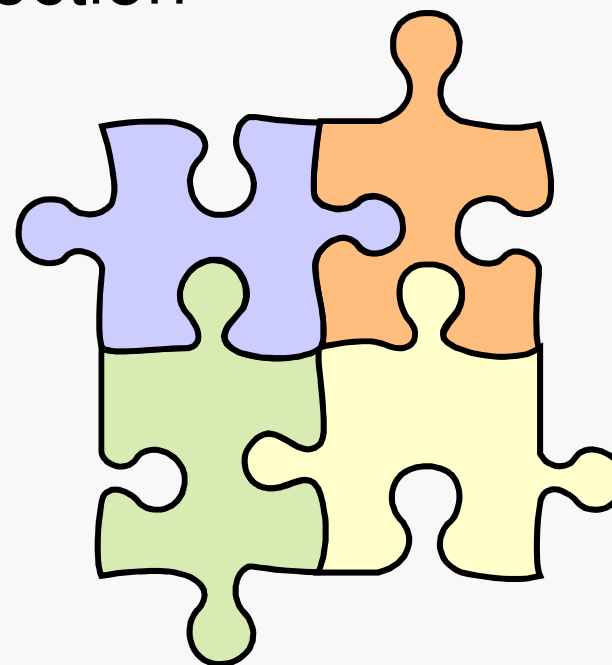5. Contact surface towards respondents

Part of a process to prepare Statistics Norway for mixed-mode data collection in household statistics

Why?

- Reduce costs
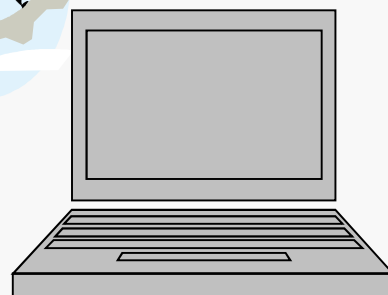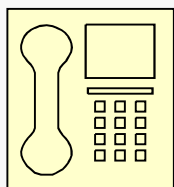
- Modernize data collection

Qualitative methods used in planning process

- Expert appraisal on existing 2.-7. round questionnaire
  - Identifying problematic questions

- Focus groups on information material and perceived response burden among panel respondents
  - Different age groups
  - Been in panel at least 3 times
  - Three groups

- Cognitive interviews
  - 8 interviews
  - Employed, Non-employed, self-employed
  - First listen to real CATI LFS interview, then follow up cognitively

Particularly difficult questions in the LFS

1. Are you looking for [searching for] another job?
   - Cognitively difficult
   - Socially difficult
2. Calculation of hours worked during reference week, and hours not worked
3. Do you have a permanent or temporary position?
4. How many are employed in the [business] where you are working?
5. Is it part of your duties to manage other people's work?

- Do we need a revision of old questionnaire as well?

Findings relevant for information flow in CATI interview vs. web questionnaire

- Build up and maintain social contract between respondent and Statistics Norway

- Endless need for information about the survey – web must offer various levels, debths, …

- Respondents enjoy to receive assistance in response process

- Avoid and clear up misunderstandings

- Respondents often do "think-alouds" before they decide on response category: interviewer "reads" this, verifies understanding and sometimes re-directs respondents

- Assistance in calculations

How can we "copy" these processes in a web mode?

Findings relevant for a LFS web questionnaire

- Response burden in LFS is generally low, but more complicated for non-employed and self-employed

- High survey tolerance for LFS, but non-employed do not really see the need

- Respondent has a communicative need: wants to explain, make sure everything is correct

- To give a response is a serious matter (and interviewer takes the burden off...)

- Non-employed: problems with very general questions + repeated questions when their situation is stable

Telephone interviews and self-completion: different cognitive processes

- Telephone: respondents are "driven forward", satisficing process

- Interviewers are supportive, but sometimes do serious mistakes

- Instructions on the web: explanations needed on multiple levels

- Calculations: respondents need assistance. How do we design good calculation tools?

- Memorizing: calendar needed. How do we design smart ways of assisting memory, giving clues?

LFS questionnaire – not developed for a flexible, deregulated labour market?

- Contract labour, part-time work, home-based work, flexible work hours,…

- Self-employed have problems understanding key concepts

  – Agreed working hours, working overtime, searching for *another* job, part-time is full-time, away from work, holidays

  – Different understanding of division between work and private life

- Do we want to measure labour or economic activity?

Ideas for improvement of data collection process

- Serve the respondent with information throughout the panel period
  - When respondents are more experienced, they tend to be more interested, higher motivation

- New areas of focus in interviewer training
  - Discuss how interviewer behaviour affects response process
  - Discuss consequences of high tempo interviewing

- Revised information material
  - Information letter, reminders, brochures: highlight positive aspects, social contract, importance for economy, personal rewards

Possible advantages with web mode

- Goodbye high tempo interviewing: respondents get more time to think

  [*For all non-employed]: Have you previously had any income-generating job, except from holiday jobs? Pensioneered respondent with long career in hotels and travel business: "No"]*

- Goodbye interviewer effects (in the web cases)

- Welcome adaptation
  - If we can make questionnaires that "talk"

- Calculations can be better, more reliable
  - If we design a user friendly questionnaire

- But can we be a comfort towards the feeling expressed in this statement…:

Focus group participant (September, 2010):

"I want to be an *interview person* instead of an interview object. In a telephone interview, I am a person. Web questionnaires are impersonal and non-serious. *Everything* is on the web these days…"

We can not stop now! Continued cognitive testing recommended

- LFS very large survey - many particularities – concentration needed

- Testing and development of main labour types, one at a time

- Probable strategy in StatNorway: develop web solution for 2.-7. panel round only, and let respondents with changes in labour status go to CATI

- Module development of web questionnaire?

- How to solve this in practice? QUEST experiences?

- And how do we meet the problems with mode effects? THAT is another paper….